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June 25, 2012

To: Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky, Chair
Supervisor Gloria Molina
Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas
Supervisor Don Knabe
Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich

From: William T. Fujioka
Chief Executive Officer

**RESPONSE TO ENSURING FOOD SECURITY FOR YOUTH WHO AGE OUT OF
FOSTER CARE BOARD MOTION (ITEM NO. 3, AGENDA OF DECEMBER 13, 2011)**

On December 13, 2011, by motion of Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas, with an amendment by Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich, the Board of Supervisors directed the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and the Interim Directors of the Department of Public Social Services (DPSS) and Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) to develop and implement a plan to ensure complete CalFresh applications are timely and successfully submitted on behalf of foster youth, ages 18-21, when dependency is terminated. Also, the CEO and Interim Directors of DPSS and DCFS are to report back quarterly on the County's improved rates of successfully enrolling aging out foster youth into CalFresh and other programs.

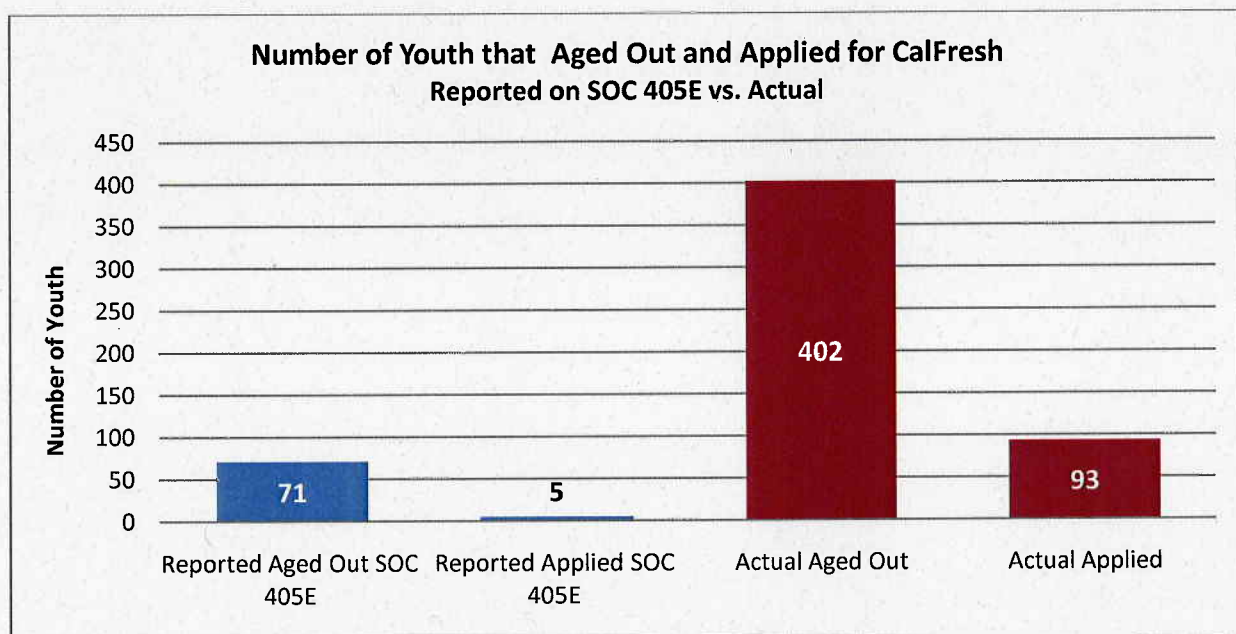
It should be noted that the amendment by Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich directing the CEO, Interim Director of DCFS, and the Chief Probation Officer to develop a comprehensive resource guide of all food banks, food closets and public programs, for provision to all exiting youth; solicit donations of food store gift cards from the community and community foundations for distribution to youth in need; enhance the availability of nutritional food information and programs on budgeting, shopping, cost comparison and meal planning to aging-out youth; and develop an outcomes evaluation mechanism by which to measure the long-term impacts of each type of food security assistance resource upon the futures of Los Angeles County aging-out youth, is being led on a separate track by Harvey Kawasaki, Division Chief, Youth Development Services, and DCFS.

"To Enrich Lives Through Effective And Caring Service"

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Intra-County Correspondence Sent Electronically Only**

In response to the motion by Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas, a Work Group was established consisting of Board Deputies, CEO, DPSS, DCFS, Probation Staff, as well as foster youth community advocates. The Work Group commenced by reviewing the State of California's Department of Social Services quarterly SOC 405E report (July to September, 2011), which stated that out of 71 youth who aged out during this quarter, only 5 or 7% applied for CalFresh.

The DCFS and Probation staff indicated that these numbers appeared to be lower than expected. We conducted a data match between DCFS/Probation and DPSS to validate the information on the SOC 405E report. Our analysis for the same time period (July through Sept. 2011) indicated that a total of 402 youth aged out during this quarter and 93 or 23% applied for CalFresh benefits.



While these numbers are still not adequate, the County needs to make a concerted effort to improve the total number of aging out youth applying for CalFresh. We can attribute the discrepancy in the data to:

1. Lack of Timely and Accurate Reporting

DCFS Children's Social Workers (CSW) is required to complete the Exit Outcomes for Youth Aging Out of Foster Care Form (#5204A) at the time the youth ages out. However, due to competing priorities, this information has not been entered in a timely manner. DCFS will work with the CSWs to ensure timely and accurate reporting.

2. Communication with Youth Once They Have Aged Out

Youth receive the paper CalFresh application shortly before they are expected to age out. However, once the youth ages out, DCFS does not have a mechanism to track which youth actually applied for and received CalFresh benefits.

DCFS and Probation will work with DPSS to develop standard quarterly reports which will track the total number of youth applying for CalFresh compared to the total the number of youth aging out. This should help improve the numbers currently being reported to the State.

In addition, we conducted a comprehensive analysis of the foster youth who aged out from 2008 through 2012. Of the 5,472 youth who aged out from 2008 through 2012, 4,182 applied for benefits with DPSS, this represent 76%. The following graphs depict:

1. The number of applications received from aging out youth and the programs for which they applied.
2. The disposition of the applications as of February 2012; and,
3. The length of time between the date the youth aged out and the date the youth submitted an application for benefits.

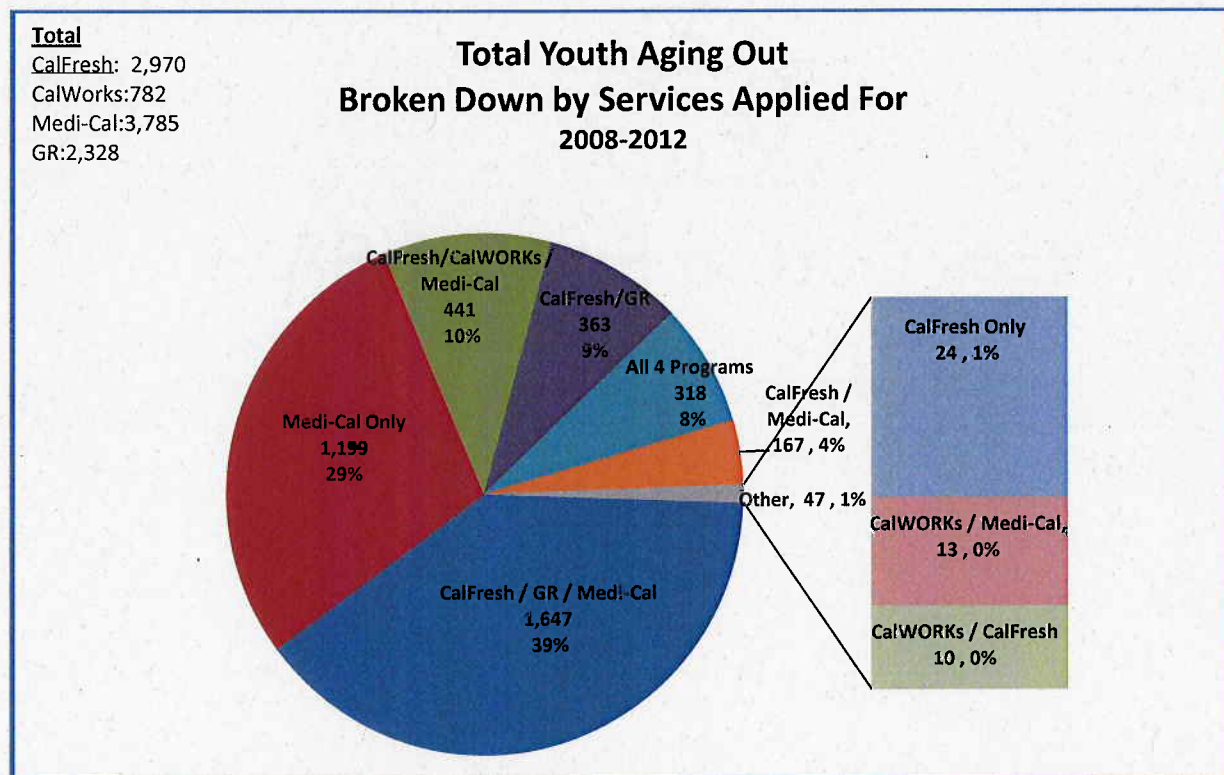
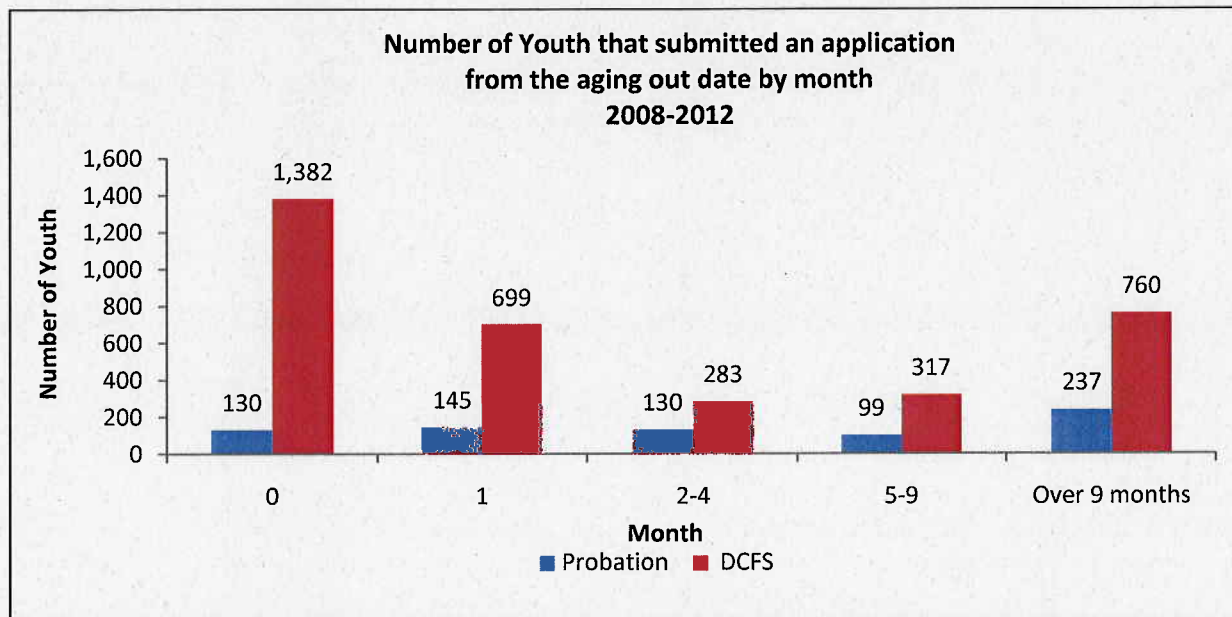


Table 1. Number and disposition of applications received from foster youth who aged out from 2008-2012.

Program	Approved	Terminated	Denied	Pending
CalFresh	1,158	1,159	583	70
Medi-Cal	1,485	1,830	372	98
General Relief	330	944	930	124
CalWORKs	392	224	144	22

* Numbers are duplicated as one youth can apply for multiple programs



It is also important to note that this data will be used to develop the quarterly standard reports (Recommendation 1) which will capture data for CalFresh as well as other DPSS programs that aging out foster youth may be eligible to apply for. The data reflected in the reports will be used for both the State's SOC 405E and the quarterly report to the Board on the improved success rates of enrolling aging out foster youth in CalFresh and other DPSS programs.

Although we have determined that the actual percentage of youth who applied for CalFresh from July 2011 to September 2011 was 23%, a focus is needed to improve the overall business process and ensure that more youth who are eligible for these programs apply. We documented the "end-to-end" aging-out process for both DCFS and Probation (Attachment A) to identify barriers and process improvement areas. Below are the major focus areas, recommendations to address those areas, and a timeline to implement the recommendations.

Recommendations:

1. Once the youth ages out or jurisdiction is terminated, their continued involvement with DCFS and Probation is strictly voluntary. Youth are not obligated to report back to DCFS and/or Probation to notify them if they have applied or are receiving CalFresh or other benefits. Often times, when youth age out they do not want to be connected with DCFS or Probation.

Starting July 16, 2012, and quarterly thereafter, DCFS and Probation will work with DPSS to prepare standard quarterly reports to track the total number of youth aging out and to determine whether they are receiving benefits. The process for validating the data prior to reporting it to the State is as follows:

- On the first week preceding the end of the quarter, DCFS will provide DPSS a comprehensive list of both DCFS and Probation youth who aged out during the quarter.
 - The following week, DPSS will perform a data match to identify the youth who have submitted an application for CalFresh and other programs. The report will also reflect the disposition of the application and the reason(s) if denied or terminated. DPSS will then submit the report to DCFS. These reports will be utilized to ensure accurate reporting to the State for the quarterly SOC 405E, as well as the quarterly report back to the Board on the County's improved rates of successfully enrolling aging out foster youth into CalFresh and other programs.
2. DCFS has implemented policies (*Youth Development Transitional Independent Living Planning (0080-505.10)*; *Youth Development Transitioning To Independence (0100-535.60)*; and, *90-Day Transition Planning Conference (0100-535.70)*) to ensure that the CalFresh benefit application is completed before the youth ages out. However, the department indicates that they do not have the resources to dedicate staff to assist youth with completing the application.
 - By August 1, 2012, DCFS will complete the review of existing policies and procedures to update the instructions to staff. Also, Probation will amend the current MDT/Practice Model policy and procedures to include the review and completion of the CalFresh application prior to youth aging out.
 - DCFS and Probation will work with DPSS to identify DPSS staff who will be assigned to specific DCFS and Probation Regional Offices as part of a pilot program to better assist youth in completing the applications.

- It should be noted that in the initial stages of the pilot program, the DPSS staff will visit each pilot office once a week. Additional days may be required depending on the need of each pilot office.
 - DCFS and Probation have identified the following five sites to implement the pilot program: DCFS – Vermont Corridor, Water Ridge, Glendora, and South County Probation – Van Nuys
 - By July 9, 2012, DCFS, Probation, and DPSS will develop and finalize parameters of the pilot program.
 - By July 16, 2012, DCFS, Probation, and DPSS will develop tools to track the performance outcomes of the pilot program.
 - By July 23, 2012, DCFS, Probation, and DPSS will provide training to the Eligibility Workers (EWs) on the procedures of the pilot program.
 - By August 1, 2012, DCFS and Probation will fully implement the six month pilot program. Also, Pilot program outcomes will be collected and reviewed on a monthly basis to determine the success of the pilot.
3. The CalFresh regulations and application process are complex making it difficult for a CSW or Deputy Probation Officer (DPO) to provide consistent and accurate information to youth on available benefits and program eligibility requirements. Also, the youth have a difficult time completing the application.
- DCFS, Probation and DPSS to implement a process where the youth can complete the application (either online or hard copy) and County staff will work to ensure that the application is processed, once the youth ages out. Since federal law prohibits processing the application prior to youth aging out (with the exception of youth in Supervised Independent Living Placement (SILP)), the process should also identify a way in which the completed application can be held and processed until after the youth has aged out.
 - Provide youth with the opportunity to complete the application on-line with the assistance of a CSW or DPO, understanding the application will not be submitted until after the youth has aged out.
 - By July 16, 2012, DPSS will develop a simple informational guide that can be given to CSWs and DPOs so that they can provide accurate and timely information to the youth on available programs.
 - By July 16, 2012, DPSS will also provide training materials and information to the (EW) so that they understand how to effectively work with foster care youth who are aging out of the system. These materials will also remind staff of the options to approve applications for foster youth without photo identification.
 - By November 30, 2012, DPSS will provide a report to CEO indicating the number of denied applications by reason from youth ages 18-21.

- By August 1, 2012, DPSS will offer three half days of training for DCFS and Probation staff.

To ensure successful implementation of the various components, the team developed the following project timeline with clear measurable deliverables.

Task	Dept.	Due Date
Pilot Program		
1. Develop and finalize parameters	DCFS,DPSS Probation	7/9/12
2. Develop tools to track performance outcomes	DCFS,DPSS Probation	7/16/12
3. Provide training to the EWs on the procedures	DCFS,DPSS Probation	7/23/12
4. Implement the pilot program and begin tracking outcomes	DCFS Probation	8/1/12
Training and Materials		
1. Develop information guide for CSWs and DPOs	DPSS	7/16/12
2. Develop training materials for EWs	DCFS,DPSS Probation	7/16/12
3. Begin three half day trainings for DCFS and Probation staff	DPSS	8/1/12
Reporting		
1. Prepare standard quarterly	DCFS,DPSS	7/16/12
2. Prepare report identifying the number of denied applications by reason for youth ages 18-21	DPSS	11/30/12

It should be noted that youth participating in the SILP Program will now be eligible to apply for CalFresh benefits. It is intended to provide non-minor dependents, who are developmentally ready to live independently, with the opportunity for highly independent living experience while receiving financial support and the support of a CSW and DPO. DCFS, Probation and DPSS are determining what policy and procedure changes need to be made in order to address SILP participants applying for CalFresh.

Each Supervisor
June 25, 2012
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If you have any questions or require additional information, please contact Antonia Jiménez at (213) 974-7365, or via email at ajimenez@ceo.lacounty.gov.

WTF:AJ:
DS:MM:ljp

Attachments: (2)

c: Executive Office, Board of Supervisors
Alliance for Children's Rights
California Food Policy Advocate
California Grocers Association
California Youth Connection
Children and Family Services
Commission for Children and Families
Hunger Action Los Angeles
Legal Aid Foundation of Los Angeles
Probation
Project Impact
Public Counsel
Public Social Services
211LA County

N:\Board Memo's-Response to Ensuring Food Security For Youth

DCFS and Probation – Current Youth Aging Out of the System

	Department	Description
1	Probation	<p>Court Ordered Placement Occurs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Deputy Probation Officer (DPO) conducts the Initial Engagement Conference (phase 1 of 4) of the Multi-Disciplinary Team (MDT) Aftercare Action Plan; collaborating with a Group Home Caseworker (GHC) to establish an initial case plan and treatment goals agreed upon by the DPO, GHC, the Youth, and the family. b. DPO conducts the Mid-Term Review (phase 2 of 4) no later than 90 days from placement to assess the Youth's progress related to the case plan and treatment goals. Adjustments to the plans and goals are made to meet the needs of the Youth.
2	DCFS/Probation	<p>Youth Ages 14 and 15</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. CSW/DPO completes and submits initial Transitional Independent Living Plan and Agreement (TILP) to the ILP coordinator. The TILP identifies goals that the youth agrees to achieve over the next 6 months such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Seek employment</i> – Youth participates in resume writing, vocational and career assessment, and job placement program. • <i>Education</i> – Youth participates in academic counseling and tutoring. Youth also agrees to work towards obtaining a high school diploma or GED. • <i>Financial Responsibility</i> – Youth will participate in budgeting and financial management training. Youth will also learn to open and maintain a checking account. b. Educational Assessment is done when educational challenges are identified. This assessment addresses less severe learning deficits such as problems with arithmetic and reading. c. Tutoring Services (as needed)
3	DCFS/Probation	<p>Youth Ages 16 Up To Emancipation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CSW/DPO conduct Ansell-Casey Life Skills Assessment which is a series of comprehensive online assessments, learning plans, and learning resources geared to help engage foster care youth and gain necessary life skills needed to exit care by addressing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ <i>Career Planning</i> TBD ➤ <i>Communication</i> – Youth's ability to engage with others, address problems, or deals with feelings. ➤ <i>Daily Living</i> – Youth's ability to perform daily functions such as washing, cleaning, grocery shopping, etc. ➤ <i>Home Life</i> TBD ➤ <i>Housing and Money Management</i> – Youth's ability to complete rental agreements, obtain car insurance, establish and maintain good credit, etc. ➤ <i>Self Care</i> – Youth's decision making regarding pregnancy prevention, avoiding STDs, avoiding drug or alcohol use, etc. ➤ <i>Social Relationships</i> – Youth's ability to deal with anger and consequences. ➤ <i>Work Life</i> - TBD ➤ <i>Work and Study Skills</i> – Youth's ability and knowledge of test preparation, presentations, library, etc. • Youth are able to attend 10 session ILP classes focusing on Life Skills Training (LST). Classes are provided by three (3) Youth Development Services (YDS) contractors. • CSW/DPO completes TILP every 6 months to re-evaluate the goals of the Youth.

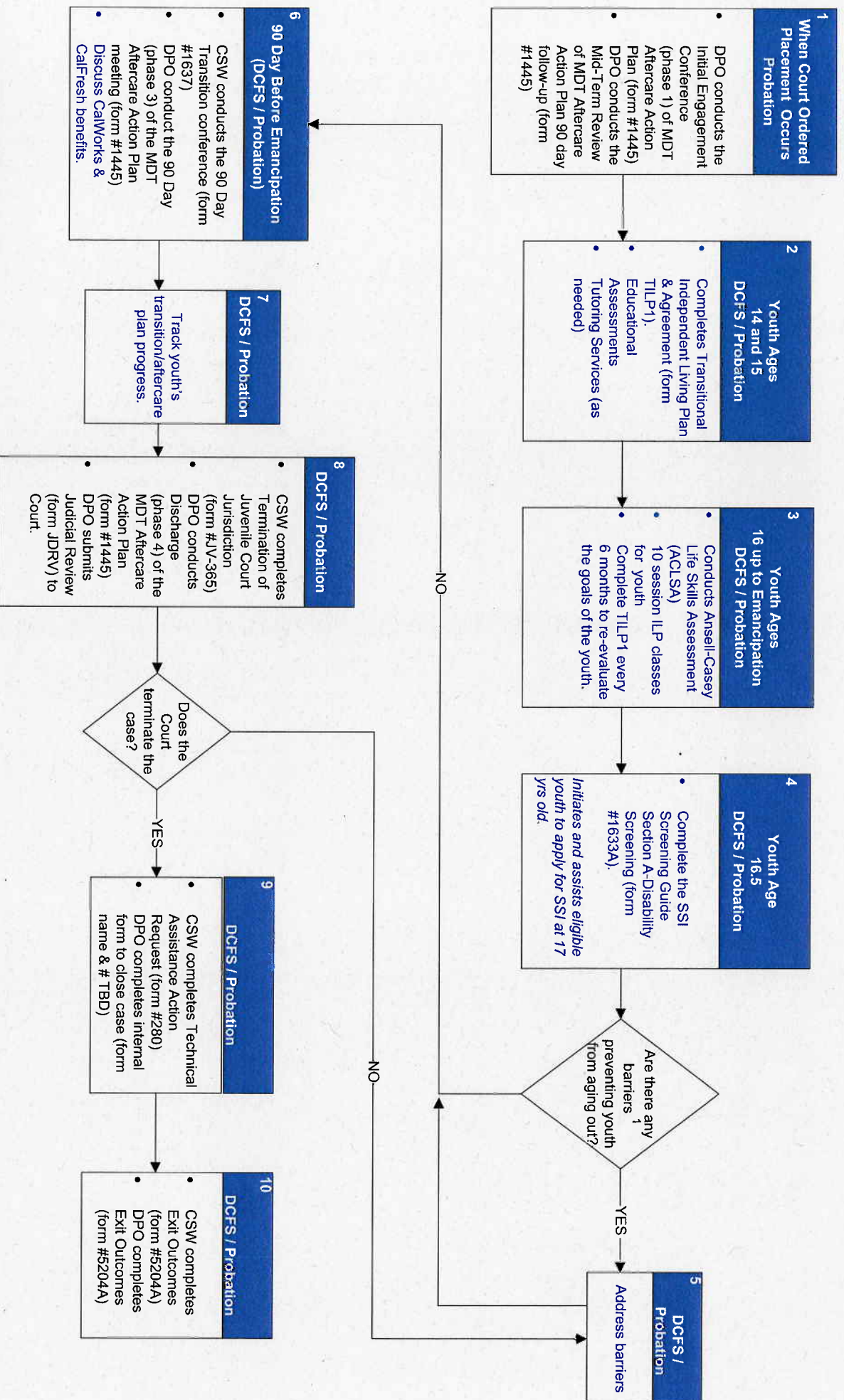
DCFS and Probation – Current Youth Aging Out of the System

	Department	Description
4	DCFS/Probation	<p>Youth Age 16.5</p> <p>a. CSW/DPO completes the SSI Screening Guide Section A - Disability Screening form to determine eligibility requirements such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Disability where an individual is unable to do any substantial, gainful activity because of a mental or physical impairment that can be expected to last for a continuous period of at least 12 months or that will result in death. Resource Limits cannot exceed \$2,000 for an individual or \$3,000 for a couple. <p>b. CSW/DPO initiates and assists eligible Youth to apply for SSI at 17 years of age.</p>
5	DCFS/Probation	<p>Are There Any Barriers to Aging Out? YES</p> <p>a. CSW/DPO address barriers such as</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Still in high school Unstable housing Unemployed No long term connection with an adult
6	DCFS/Probation	<p>Are There Any Barriers to Aging Out? NO</p> <p>a. CSW conducts the 90-Day Transition conference that helps Youth take the necessary steps towards successful independent living. The transition plan focuses on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Education Employment Housing Mentoring & Continuing Support Services Family and Other Permanent Connections Health Insurance <p>b. DPO conducts the MDT Meeting (phase 3 of 4) 90 days prior to the anticipated date of discharge to determine what is needed prior to release to ensure a smooth transition back to the community.</p> <p>c. CSW/DPO discusses CalWorks & CalFresh benefits. Youth are given hard copy applications and are asked to go to their local DPSS benefits.</p>
7	DCFS/Probation	<p>a. CSW/DPO conducts a monthly follow-up to track the Youth's transition/aftercare plan progress. The CSW/DPO focuses on preparing the Youth for self-sufficiency and facilitates connections to resources during the 90 days. The Youth is also introduced to the ILP Transitional Coordinator who will serve as their aftercare contact if the Youth chooses to continue receiving support services.</p>
8	DCFS/Probation	<p>a. DCFS CSW completes Termination of Juvenile Court Jurisdiction.</p> <p>b. DPO conducts the Discharge (phase 4 of 4) and collaborates with the GHC to ensure the plan and goals are met by the Youth</p> <p>c. DPO completes Judicial Review which reports the Youth's progress to the Court</p>

Attachment A

9	DCFS/Probation	Does the Court Terminate the Case? YES <ul style="list-style-type: none">a. CSW completes Technical Assistance Action Request to close the case internallyb. DPO forwards the minutes of the court proceeding to Probation's Placement HQ to close the case internally
Back To 5	DCFS/Probation	Does the Court Terminate the Case? NO <ul style="list-style-type: none">a. CSW/DPO addresses the reasons why the Court did not terminate the case. Depending on what is required, the time will vary Please note, the amount of time needed to address the reasons may vary depending on the court's request and the specifics of the case.
10	DCFS/Probation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">a. CSW completes Exit Outcomes. DPO completes Exit Outcomes <p>*Youth who have emancipated may elect to receive ongoing supportive services such THPP, Transportation, Food, etc.</p>

DCFS and Probation – Youth Aging Out of the System



Legend

Black – CSW or DPO responsibility
Blue – CSW and DPO responsibility

Updated: 3/24/2012

1. Still in high school; court believes the youth is not ready due to unstable housing, no long-term connection with an adult, no employment, etc.